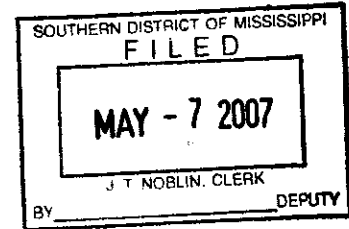




United for Children - United for Change



May 4, 2007

Mr. J.T. Noblin, Clerk
United States District Court for the
Southern District of Mississippi
United States Courthouse
245 East Capitol Street
Jackson, MS 39201

I send this mutually written letter in the name of and with the permission of the Coalition for Children's Welfare regarding the **Olivia Y., et al, v. Barbour lawsuit**. This group came together slightly four years ago (prior to this present administration) united in their concern for the children in Mississippi who consistently rank last in almost every measurement of child well being -- Family Economic Well Being; Health; Safety and Behavioral Well Being; Educational Attainment; Community Connectedness; Social Relationships; Emotional and Spiritual Well Being.

It seems the plight of our children does not get better in these areas but too often becomes worse. In areas where we have made improvements, so have other States. Our improvements do not move us beyond "band-aiding" and have not provided lasting or consistent results. We write this statement so the Court knows our concern and our willingness to support any and all efforts the Mississippi Department of Human Services makes to move beyond maintaining a system which has been broken for decades.

Many of our agencies provide highly professional services to Mississippi children and their families. We are both qualified and willing to provide consultation and support as negotiations move forward. We believe these negotiations provide a ray of hope which we have not seen since the early 80's. This is a wonderful opportunity for this Administration to make a significant positive impact on our serving children and families. We would very much like to be a part of that effort.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Gunn

for

(see next sheet)

MEMBERS OF COALITION FOR CHILDREN'S WELFARE

Catholic Diocese of Jackson
Catholic Charities of Jackson
Children's Defense Fund
(Southern Region)
Citizens for Quality Education
Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities
Congregations for Children
Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi
Friends of Children of MS (Head Start)
Lockett Maternal and Child Health --
Advocacy & Consulting Services
LIFE (Living Independently for
Everyone)
MS Deaf-Blind Project
MS Chapter -- Natl. Assoc. of
Social Workers
MS Conference of the United Methodist Church
MS Families as Allies for
Children's Mental Health
MS Families for Kids
MS Human Service Coalition
MS Low Income Child Care Initiative
MS Religious Leadership Conference
MS Youth Justice Project
Parents United Together
Public Policy Center of MS
Unitarian Universalist Church/Jackson
Walker Foundation

There are additional groups who belong to this Coalition,
but their Boards do not allow those names to be used in taking a public stand

Copy:

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Children's Rights
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New York, New York 10001

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